

**David Rogers interview, 2015-02-23 : interview conducted by Nathan J. Moore**

**INTERVIEW LOG**

00:00:39 Name is David Rogers. Lives in Eugene, Oregon. Born in San Francisco, California, 1949.

00:01:03 Works as a home care provider. Has been a home care worker with Senior & Disabled Services for last couple of years. Previously worked with people with disabilities through other agencies, including Safe Inc., a drop-in center. 10-11 years of total experience.

00:01:47 Became caregiver through professional music career. Played gigs at nursing homes and disabilities agencies. Director of Safe Inc. offered him a regular shift. Relates well to adults in the mental health system. Mentions connections between disabilities advocates and the Oregon Country Fair.

00:03:26 Recently transitioned to being a home care worker. Connected with an agency right down the street from group center where employed. First client was a man with cerebral palsy. Helped client use technology that allowed him to work, providing a "telephone service." Mentions importance of alternative work concepts. Also, wheeled client around town in non-powered wheelchair. Discusses occupational health issues associated with transporting clients in wheelchairs.

00:07:10 One-on-one care is positive, if client likes you. Gives you a feeling of importance.

00:07:39 Currently working with two clients through Senior & Disabled Services. Also was working with third client on a temporary basis. One client is a well-known mental health activist, involved with Oregon Country Fair; knows Patch Adams and other "psychiatric clown activists." Temporary client was a truck driver. Just starting to work with a new client who is moving to Eugene and has connections to Lane Independent Living Alliance. Likes to see agencies work together and likes to work part-time for different agencies.

00:10:13 Would have liked more specialized training with operating wheelchairs and working with immobile clients. Important to learn the right ways to twist and bend.

00:11:48 Works at Lane Independent Living Alliance's peer support club, “manning the desk for people who come in.” Working in groups and providing one-on-one care has “fallen together.” Client with telephone service also was member of Lane Independent Living Alliance.

00:12:39 Special skills needed? Patience. Knowing who you connect to better. Has eccentric traits and likes working with people with whom he connects.

00:13:33 Typical day? – Depends on the time of year. Part-time jobs are different pieces of a puzzle. Also, works for Harry & David (food and gift retailer) during part of the year.

00:15:34 Relationships with clients – friendly, but it is understood that he is a caregiver. Does not share details of personal life. No religion or politics unless client brings up those topics. Believes in the “consumer model” of respecting rights and boundaries of client, letting client call the shots.

00:16:47 What if a client wants to make a bad decision? Will say something if client's health is threatened.

00:17:15 Talks about forming relationships with family members of clients.

00:18:35 What do you talk about with clients? Lets clients choose discussion topics. One client talks about all aspects of driving a log truck; another talks about being an advocate for people in the mental health system. Does not initiate conversations about personal topics unless relevant to work.

00:19:49 Approaches intimate tasks with “very courteous detachment.”

00:20:20 Any particular stories that capture the essence of being a caregiver? Early morning jokes with one client – He has a roommate who is a joke book salesman; shares jokes with client. Credits “hippie connections in Eugene” with giving him a good sense of humor.

00:21:44 Represented one of the agencies for whom he works at the Oregon Country Fair. “Doors of Perception” booth at fair represents agencies that work with people with disabilities. Performed skits with “famous psychiatric clowns” Patch Adams and Carl Hammerschlag.

00:23:03 Likes to use experience with different agencies to help others. Discusses importance of networking. Working for more than one agency makes it easier to steer clients toward better resources.

00:24:20 Is a member of SEIU [Service Employees International Union], but wants to be more involved. Understands that caregivers are not paid enough; one of the reasons why many caregivers have multiple jobs. Very supportive of SEIU.

00:25:36 Would like to get together more with other caregivers. Meets some when working in group setting. Hard to meet co-workers when doing one-on-one care.

00:26:21 Discusses experiences working at Lane Independent Living Alliance. Clients come to connect with others and participate in activities. Activities include creative writing, art, karaoke, watching games and movies together. Sometimes gets paid musical gigs through organization.

00:27:59 Performs music at assisted living facilities.

00:28:38 Most gratifying part of job: “the feeling that it seems to be working out.” No complaints from clients. Disabled people can be unhappy; likes adding humor and friendliness to their lives and empowering clients.

00:29:32 Discusses humor as a disarming mechanism. Helps alleviate depression. Tells two detailed stories about dealing with specific clients. Sometimes things get to you – tells story of having to call police on a woman. Not a painless job.

00:32:16 How do you relax? Good to have positive relationship with somebody you can talk to. Discusses the problem of self-medication; emphasizes importance of dealing with stress in other ways.

00:33:46 Still plays music for money on the “organic finger-picking circuit.” Not as many gigs as in the past. Sees performances at assisted living facilities as directly related to caregiving work; part of the whole experience. Music can be profoundly therapeutic. Old-time music—the old corny stuff—seems to work better than other songs. Very rarely plays when working in one-on-one settings. Clients have other priorities.

00:36:18 Taught music lessons at Lane Independent Living Alliance. Hoping to expand lessons for disabled people.

00:36:45 Talks about the experience of being a musician and having a day job. The day job relieves stress caused by difficulties associated with the music industry.

00:37:57 Do you define yourself as a musician first and foremost? Caregiving and music are both important. Just different parts of psyche.

00:38:26 Has not been involved in the union's legislative activities, but wants to participate more with SEIU.

00:38:48 Discusses union songs and mentions musicians Woody Guthrie and Harry Stamper.

00:39:18 Has written songs influenced by previous day jobs. Has not yet written a song about caregiving. Recites occupational poem written for SAFE Inc., a drop-in center in Springfield, Oregon, for mental health clients.

00:41:15 Talks about connections between country-western and folk music and occupational songs.

00:42:43 Previous jobs – surveyor for Bureau of Land Management. Was severely injured working as a forest fire fighter; experienced being temporarily disabled.

00:45:18 Has worked mostly with men, but is willing to work with women. Depends on what the client wants. Has worked with women in group settings.

00:46:06 Wants clients to feel that they have power. Without that, you are going back to the “old medical model” where doctor gives orders and patients follow. Learned a lot about client empowerment from client who has been an activist for a long time. Mentions the influence of Ken Kesey's “One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest” and the “hippie radical movement.”

00:48:16 What are some things that people in the community might not know about your job? Technical stuff like handling wheelchairs and other technology. Many people cannot imagine themselves working with people with disabilities.

00:50:08 Discusses occupational culture of working at Harry & David. Refers to job taking orders over the phone as being a “pear jockey” and tells humorous work-related story.

00:51:30 How do you balance multiple jobs and hobbies? Good at “goofing off,” although music is a job, too. Makes sure to have “goof off” time that is not about music. Likes to hang out and tell jokes.

00:53:25 How long do you want to be a care provider? Wants to retire from day jobs at some point and just play music. Does not have a union pension through SEIU. Also talks about previously being a relief driver and a member of the Teamsters. Does have Medicare and Oregon Health Plan coverage. Talks about various health care systems around the world and the need for better health care coverage in the U.S.

00:59:13 End of interview.

